REMARKS

I.   Summary of Applicants' Reply

Claims 1, 2, 12, 23 have been amended. Applicants found support for the amendments from published application number 2004/0250159 A1 at, for example, ¶¶ 69, 77, 85-89, 100-103, and 108.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 , second paragraph, and under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Reconsideration of this application and prompt allowance is respectfully requested.

II.   Summary of Telephonic Interview

Applicants thank Examiners Chankong and Hoang for their time on June 27th for a telephonic interview. In the interview the § 112 rejection was discussed and the Examiner agreed to remove the claim objection regarding the preambles of claims 12 and 23. The rejection under § 103 was also discussed with reference claims 1, 2, 12, and 23 and distinctions between the claims and the cited references were made.

III.   35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lim (Customizable Virtual Prive Network Service with QoS) in view of Hipp (US 7,210,147). The 103 rejection of claim 1 should be removed for at least the following reasons. None of the cited references show or suggest "modifying the operating system kernel to designate a lead operating system kernel for a distributed host, wherein the lead operating system kernel performs tasks for the distributed host." The Examiner pointed to Lundback (US 6,912,590) to show "single IP addressing for [a] multi-processor distributed application" (p. 7, Jan. 2 Office Action). However, Lundback does not show or suggest "modifying the operating system kernel" in any way with the cluster of processors described in Lundback. Rather, Lundback describes using an IP handler distributed throughout the cluster to provide exchangeable IP interfaces.

The Examiner rejected claims 2 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Alfieri (US 2002/009849) in view of Dalton (US 2003/0172109) and Lundback. Regarding claim 2, Lundback nor any of the references yet cited disclose or suggest "assigning to the first message a first routing context number, wherein the first message is determined to be associated

with the first routing context using the first routing context number." In rejecting this limitation in dependent claim 4, the Examiner pointed to Alfieri ¶ 37, lines 1-5, which discloses checking a VR number on a message (see p. 7, Non-Final Office Action). Alfieri uses the VR number for routing messages in a network among routers, but does not disclose or suggest "assigning to the first message a first routing context number." The VR number is therefore used for a similar purpose as an IP address would be used.

Regarding claim 12, none of the cited references disclose or suggest "the network device tags the messages to maintain the association with a routing context while being processed by the network device" or "a plurality of processors residing in the network device implementing a distributed host, wherein a processor of the plurality of processors implements multiple hosts." Alfieri fails to show or suggest "tag[ging] the messages to maintain the association with a routing context while being processed by the network device" because Alfieri teaches receiving a message and routing on the basis of information already present in the message (see ¶ 37-38).

Regarding claim 23, none of the cited references disclose or suggest "a plurality of processors residing in the apparatus and implement a distributed host, wherein individual processors of the plurality of processors determine responsibility for processing packets received at each processor."

IV.   35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejection and Dependent Claims

Applicants consider the amendments to claims 1, 2, 12, and 23 to overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112 rejections on claims 1-12 and 21-24. Applicants consider the Examiner's rejections of the dependent claims moot based on applicants' remarks relative to the independent claims, from which the dependent claims depend. Accordingly, applicants also respectfully submit that claims 3-11, 21-22, and 24, each of which depends from one of independent claims 1, 2, 12, and 23, are allowable for at the same reasons that their corresponding independent claims are allowable.

V.   Authorization

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees, which may be required for this amendment, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0219

In the event that an Extension of Time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an Extension of Time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that Extension of Time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an Extension of Time or credit any overpayment for an Extension of Time to Deposit Account No. 08-0219.

Respectfully submitted,

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